



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 17 July 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
17 JULY 1968

1. Iraq

Baghdad radio announced this morning that a "military command council" has seized power. President Arif and Prime Minister Yahya, along with the army and air force chiefs, have been removed from office. The orientation of the command council is not yet clear, but one report indicates that it may be connected with the Baathist party, a strongly anti-Western organization that once briefly governed Iraq and is now in power in neighboring Syria.

Initial proclamations of the command council have a standard Arab "revolutionary" flavor. They denounce the Arif government for neglecting the army and thus contributing to the Arab defeat in June 1967.

2. North Korea

Recent satellite photography shows that at least 16 of North Korea's 27 SA-2 surface-to-air missile sites are now occupied. This is an increase of two since the beginning of the year. Thirteen new sites were constructed since the seizure of the Pueblo, but this is the first detected increase in firing units.

The Soviets probably supplied the new equipment under last year's aid agreement.

3. Uruguay

The Soviets have offered aircraft and other equipment to the Uruguayan air force, on credit terms dubbed by one official "so liberal that they amounted to grant aid." Jet trainers and transports probably were involved. We know that key officers in the air force are unhappy with their present equipment and are looking for new sources of supply.

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4. Czechoslovakia

[redacted] members of the Soviet party's Central Committee have been summoned to Moscow for a meeting today. The apparent haste in calling the gathering suggests that exceptionally important matters are to be considered. At the least, Brezhnev would have the opportunity to report on last weekend's Warsaw meeting and to obtain a committee resolution that could serve as another element of pressure on the Czechs.

Prague meanwhile is standing its ground. In an outspoken press conference on 15 July, Dubcek's man in charge of security and defense pointedly suggested that changes be made in the Warsaw Pact organization in order to emphasize the equality of Pact members. The Czech party leadership met yesterday to prepare a reply to the still unpublished letter sent to them by the five Warsaw conferees.

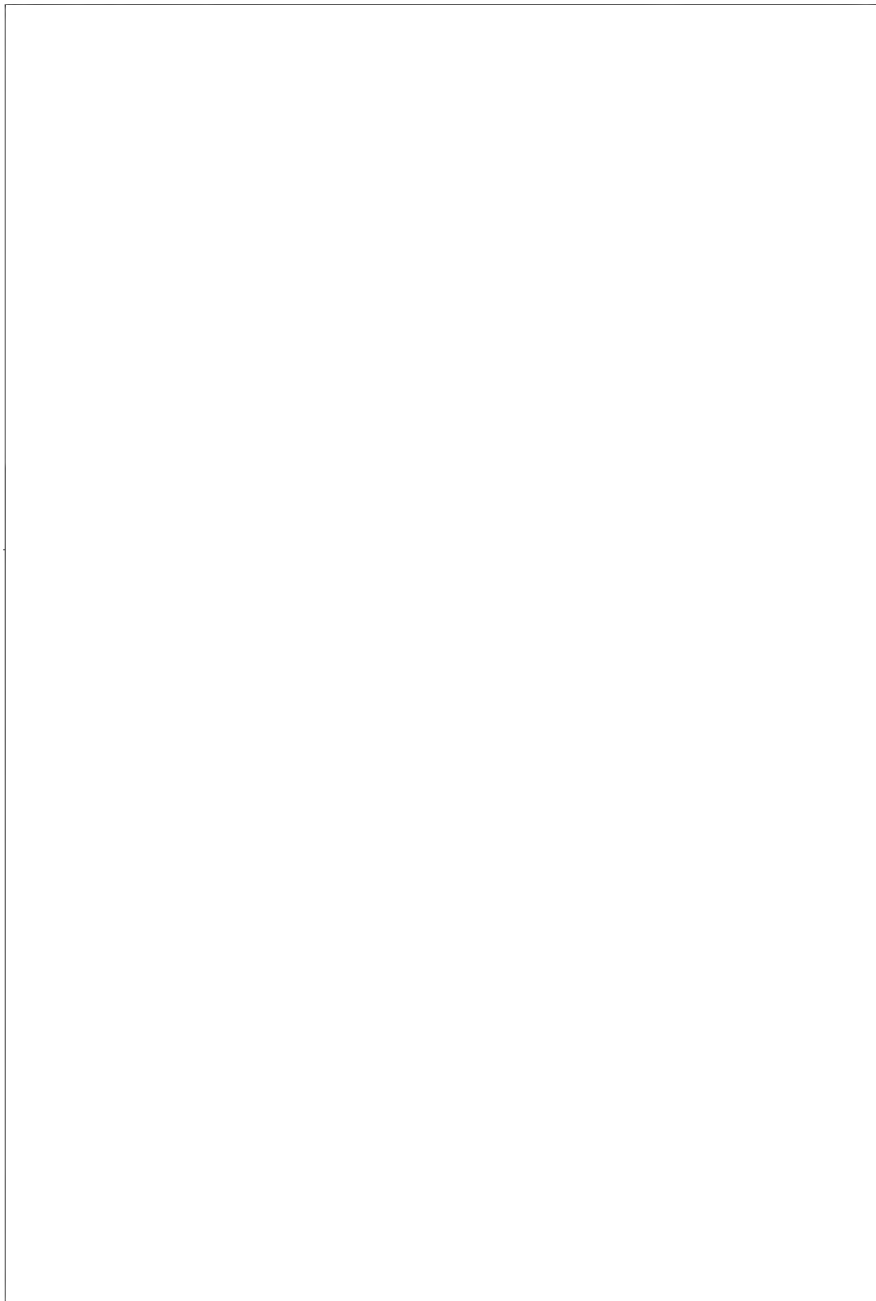
A top Czech party spokesman has said that the French and Italian Communist parties have urged the Soviets not to intervene in Czech affairs. The British and Belgian parties apparently have taken a similar line. The Yugoslavs and Rumanians are continuing to give vocal support to the Czechs.

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5. Soviet Union -
Czechoslovakia

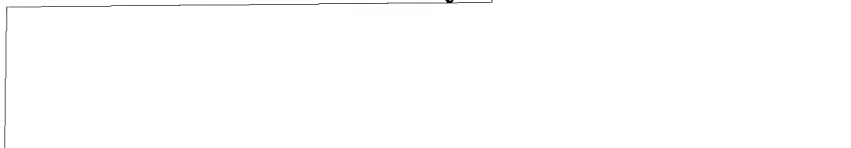
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6. Communist China -
North Vietnam

Peking is making new efforts to get traffic on the rail line to North Vietnam back to normal. Severe factional fighting has impeded traffic through Kwangsi Province since mid-May.

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7. Nigeria

The Biafrans are worried that publicity over their refugee problem is diverting attention from their aims of achieving a cease-fire and a political settlement.

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8. Indonesia

The army drive against Communist insurgents in East Java, now in its seventh week, is producing results. The Communist party chief was captured recently and one of his top deputies killed. Together they were reported in charge of guerrilla activity in the area.

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50 to 60 suspected Communists are being executed each day. On a smaller scale, this recalls the bloodbath that followed the Communist coup attempt three years ago. The insurgents nonetheless can still field sizeable groups, and the government expects that military operations will be necessary for some time.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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The Communist Youth Festival and Vietnam: The Communists' Ninth World Youth Festival, to be held in Sofia, Bulgaria, from 28 July to 6 August, will heavily emphasize Vietnam, with a "Vietnam Day" scheduled for 29 July, according to Embassy Sofia.

The embassy notes that Vietnam is virtually the only unifying issue among the various delegations, several of which are widely divided on other issues. At least 150 Vietnamese delegates representing both North Vietnam and the Liberation Front are expected, and American deserters and draft resisters are to meet with delegates during the festival. A Vietnam information center will open in downtown Sofia on Vietnam Day

to provide current information on the course of the war and to sell Viet Cong banners and medals made from downed US aircraft.

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Giap Shows: Hanoi's Defense Minister, Vo Nguyen Giap, made one of his relatively rare appearances recently. Hanoi Radio's domestic service noted on 15 July that Giap had been present at a recent regional military conference discussing new instructions concerning the region's "political tasks."

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Hanoi on Dr. Spock: Citing Western reports as its source, Radio Hanoi yesterday said that Dr. Benjamin Spock recently received a standing ovation from

an audience which he had addressed in Cleveland. Broadcast in English over Hanoi's international service, the announcement added that Spock had recently been fined and sentenced to prison "only because he opposed the dirty US war in Vietnam."

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